

analysis

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Nothing so needs reforming as other people's habits. — MARK TWAIN.

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How a Jew Came to God

An Intellectual Experience

I AM a Jew. Not that anyone cares, least of all myself, and my abrupt declaration serves only to introduce the story of an intellectual experience, not a sermon nor anything suggestive of a purpose. My excuse for bringing the matter up at this time is that there is some talk about a "Jewish problem," and the recrudescence of this phrase, with its socially unpleasant connotations, has again got me to asking myself what it is that I am when I name myself, or am named, a Jew. For the better part of a half century I have tried to capture the invariable positives and negatives of the human being so labelled, but, so far, my intellectual curiosity has not been answered. I admit that this curiosity was whetted on the emery wheel of unpleasant experiences, but it is still lively after the years have turned these experiences into pleasant reminiscences.

Maybe I would have forgotten the whole thing if some people who call themselves Christian, which defies definition almost as stubbornly, did not make it their business to re-fasten the label on me whenever through forgetfulness I have allowed the edges to become loose. They seem to care a great deal more than I do. And they show their concern in ways that are often ingenious and with a sense of delicacy; and sometimes they are not so nice about it. There's the fellow who explains, when he invites me to lunch, that he is not taking me to his club—I did not know he belongs to one—because "there's a stupid feeling among the members, which of course I do not share, that might prove embarrassing, and I wouldn't have that for all the world." Or the one who in a complimentary mood assures me that I am not a Jew but "like one of us." And the cliché "some of my best friends are Jews" is definitely used to properly place me. Thus, by innuendo, inference or direct statement, or even a knowing look, I am gratuitously reminded that I am what I am whenever the fact slips my mind. All my years I have been called, and have called myself, a Jew, and that, according to some authorities, establishes the fact. But, the question will not down, what do these three letters describe or define? I've asked the question of many people and have got almost as many different answers, not one of which squares with observable fact.

Subjectively, I know that "I am"; but as for "a Jew," I have no consciousness of it at all. It has never been revealed to me; I have learned it by rote only. Hunger, fatigue, headache and itch are quite real. There is no mistaking these facts of consciousness. But never have I experienced a similar perception of Jewishness. There may be people to whom perceptions of race, religion or nationality are as definite as the taste of ice cream, but I am inclined to believe that these ideas are like lipstick or a coat—something one puts on and takes off. Or has put on, like shackles. Be that as it may, I am devoid of any sensory perception of Jewishness.

A LEXICOGRAPHER'S SEARCH

I LOOK into the mirror and see there the reflection of features similar to those worn by others called Jews. Yes, my face has a marked resemblance to my father's, also to my brothers', and my children bear the same features. Maybe, then, there are certain distinctions of physiognomy which, if they could be captured in words, would settle this matter of definition. However, I observe features quite suggestive of my own worn by people who are not called Jews; the exclusiveness becomes uncertain. My people came from Russia, and I notice that many Russian Christians, on the basis of their facial characteristics, could easily pass for blood relations. Then I see Jews with straight, thin noses, dark skins and slender contours, features usually associated with Latin peoples; the Jewish girl I married was sometimes taken for a Spaniard. Again, there is the hooked proboscis of the German Jew which is equally characteristic of the Aryan faces. The search for a definition must go beyond features.

I said my people came from Russia, from the southern part, around Odessa. In the eighth and ninth centuries that part of the world was occupied by a pagan people known as the Khazars. The record classifies them as Tartars, but as the territory embraced a transit between the Black Sea and the Caspian, there is some doubt as to the singleness of their blood, for in all probability it was tainted with Persian, Hun, Armenian, Slavonic and whatever other kind came down this path of war and trade. Now, legend has it that many of these Khazars were converted to Judaism; some say the entire tribe was. Can it be, then, that far back among my progenitors I could find an adulterated Tartar? Perish the thought! Yet we know that marriage is a matter of propinquity, not of race; and if the Russian Jew bears a likeness to his Christian compatriot, the idea of consanguinity cannot be put away. Taking into consideration the fact of biological transmission of physical characteristics, can we not say that in his matings the Jewish male, like all other males, has not been scrupulously race-conscious? And Jewish girls are not hard to look at either. But, why belabor the point? Solomon, we are told, had three hundred wives and a thousand concubines. He picked them for their beauty only, and he went far and wide to get them. So, we Jews got pretty well mixed up with non-Jews long, long before the dispersion, and have been as continuously guilty of intermarriage as the people we intermarried with. It seems, then, that a racial definition, in the sense of a continuous stream of the same kind of blood, will hardly hold.

Well, then, how about a definition based on religion? And the rejoinder is, which Jewish religion are you talking about? A while ago I was reading about the ritual in the Holy Temple at the time of Pontius Pilate and it occurred to me that a reincarnated high priest of the times would find himself more at home at a Catholic high mass than in the modern temple of the

"better class" Jew. Imagine the mortification of a bewhiskered and skull-capped Polish Jew in the house of worship frequented by his hatless son, where the women's chests are exposed and where no rail or elevation separates the sexes. It's as much as to ask him to eat pork chops—which the son does. In proportion to their numbers, the Jews can probably lay claim to as many schisms as do the Christians, to say nothing of the many who own up to no sect.

Then there is the attempt to give the Jew a nationalistic definition. If I adhere to this idea I say to myself: I am part of a political entity which lost its physical reality some two thousand years ago; this nation exists in the record of its past, its cultural continuity and in its well-advertised manifest destiny. It is a nation without the physical appurtenances of one. Examining that fancy, I ask myself, can two thousand years of history be wiped out, as if it never happened? What warrant have we in nature for the persistence of national entities? Has not every state carved out its career with the sword, and when that sword lost its edge did not the state disappear? It is interesting to read about the ancient Greeks, to study the records of Aztec culture or the unearthed artifacts of lost empires. I would like to know why these social integrations disappeared, why such highly developed civilizations could not maintain themselves. Such information might help me foretell the course of the civilization of which I am a part. But I feel no call to fight for the restoration of a state which exists only in poetry. Citizenship in a state without authority is a contradiction. Furthermore, the ideology involved in the proposed restoration smacks too much of Hitlerian nationalism based on racial purity, reinforced with claims to divine selection. It defies the record and is decidedly dangerous.

And so it has been all these years. An examination of the suggested definitions amounts to a process of elimination, and it is not surprising that mysticism is resorted to by many; accordingly, the Jew is endowed with a soul which is *sui generis* and undefinable. Maybe so. But I confess to an incapacity in such super-sensory perceptibility. When things get beyond the rational I am lost. . . . And so, I have come to the conclusion that I am a Jew because I call myself one, and so does everybody else who cares to classify me, and that is all there is to it. I have hit upon a description of the Jew which, while lacking the conciseness of a definition, helps to identify his particularism. We'll go into that after I have got along with my story.

EARLY BACKGROUND

THE lower west side of New York at the turn of the century was going through the usual transition of a fine residential section into an area of low-priced tenements, rooming houses and marginal factories. The street where I spent my pre-high school days was already entering the factory phase. A few streets away the vestiges of early New York aristocracy held on to

its brownstone elegance; that was nearly twenty years before enterprising realtors rescued these anachronisms from well-deserved demolition. They painted the fronts white and the shutters green, and invested the section with profitable romance by reviving its ancient name of Greenwich Village. I never heard the name when I went to school in that section.

There were two Jewish families besides mine in the neighborhood, and one moved uptown before I got to high school. Irish, French and Italian emigrants had taken over, sometimes creating distinct nationalistic islands on contiguous streets, sometimes getting all mixed up as they did on my street. Much to the chagrin of my mother, my associates were not only not of my people, but were inclined to practices not sanctioned by the *Talmud* or any other moral code. The only reason I did not accompany some of my companions to the reformatory was that I was not apprehended in the business of selling lead pipe purloined from partially built or empty houses.

One had to fight to live in this environment, and the "Jew" epithet was as good a *casus belli* as any other. But, the matter rarely came up in a purely descriptive form, the viciousness of the accompanying adjectives rather than the word itself being the real challenge. I was yet to learn the flavor of real anti-Semitism. The fact that I didn't go to church on Sunday marked me off, but I recall being envied for that good fortune. I could and would fight. I was good at the games we played, and when the gang had some collective purpose to pursue I was expected to do my share. Race consciousness never entered into our affairs.

I knew I was a Jew. There was no question about that but it did not bother me. It did bother my mother, of course. She had a rabbi come to the house to teach me Hebrew. My apostasy began right there and then, not only because this added education interfered with my ball games, but also because of my objections to the pedagogical method of the rabbi. He insisted on my learning Hebrew by sight and sound, rather than by understanding of the text, and progress was made difficult by my impertinent interrogations. I began to suspect that these hieroglyphics hid objectionable ideas.

An incident of this period did much to undermine whatever inclination I may have had toward the ancient tradition. One very cold night the rabbi tottered into our house in a pitiful condition; it took a half dozen glasses of boiling tea to thaw him out. He then told how a sympathetic "goy" had offered him a pair of gloves and why he had refused the gift; a few must not be the instrument of bringing a "mitzvah," or blessing, on a non-believer. That was the first time, I believe, that I came smack up against the doctrine of the "chosen people," and it struck me as stupid and mean.

The real and permanent education of the child consists in the fermentation of ideas put into its mind by experience; against that all book learning is as nothing. For instance, I remember well my last trip to the synagogue, when I was eleven years of age, on Yom Kippur. The ritual was of ancient vintage; women and children worshipped in the balcony, while the shoeless, shawled and skull-capped men on the main floor faced the walls as they incanted the prayers to the metronomic swaying of their bodies. Not all of the men followed custom so meticulously, but the more devout could be so identified. One of these attracted my attention because he was head of the other Jewish family on my street. This fellow came by a bad reputation in the community, for shady business practices, for untruthfulness and loudness, for self-assertion. My folks were hardly on speaking terms with this man or his family. Well, on this particular holy day our neighbor was doing his devotions with noticeable intensity, and that started me thinking and asking questions. Could one day of hard prayer in a synagogue wash out the sins of a whole year? Is God bought off so cheaply? My mother married me for a while and then brushed me off with "the ways of God must not be questioned." That settled it. I sneaked off to an important indoor-out game on the street.

My mother finally got her wayward son into high school. Those four years were indeed happy ones. Contact with boys of more reputable background weaned me away from docks, warehouses, gang warfare and trial by fistfight. Football helped to relegate the ego which had somewhat collapsed in this more rarified atmosphere; the acclaim of the crowd on Saturday afternoons was reassuring. I began to take a more than perfunctory interest in books. I even became conscious of marks. I took part in extra-curricular activities other than athletics, such as the school paper and a literary society, and all in all enjoyed high school immensely. During these years not once, as far as I can recall, did the matter of discrimination make itself felt.

HIGHER LEARNING

THEN came college. To me matriculation was quite an experience, almost a hallowed event. In those days most boys who went to college did so because that was in the tradition of their class and matriculation was like the first shave, something one did because one had arrived. Boys of my world almost always completed their formal education at fourteen, a few more put in four years of high school (or less, if circumstances demanded), and a smaller number whose parents were ambitious for them got to college. Higher education was hard to come by; only those who showed special ability, as evidenced in competitive examinations, were subsidized. Society had not yet taken on the collective duty of raising its morose level. Hence, for those of us who were determined to "work our way through" the mere fact of having entered was an exhilarating experience.

Nothing happened during the first few weeks to indicate that social life in college would be much different from what it was in high school. I went out for football, fully confident that I would make the grade. In my relations with the squad I was diffident, not because of any race consciousness, but because I felt out of place in an atmosphere where tradition counted. I was a bit afraid of it. In high school this lack was brought home to me in a poignant way. Through our mutual interest in literature another lad and I struck up a close acquaintanceship, and one afternoon he invited me to dine with his folks. It was not the quiet elegance of the home that most impressed me, although that was considerably different from the utilitarian surroundings I associated with home. What struck me with force was the easy courtesy that graced the relationship between my friend, his older brother and their mother. It wasn't manners, it was manner. This was all new to me and I was filled with fear that I might prove myself out of place. Particularly so when the two boys came to dinner dressed in their dinner-coats (which I believed were worn only at class and fraternity dinners); in not the slightest way was I made conscious of my non-conformity. I learned then that in social deportment the docks had taught me little.

A few such experiences put me on my guard. I played hard and left the matter of companionship to the others, expecting it to come when I proved myself. One thing annoyed me. In those days of interlocking interference the hall carrier was part of the ball, and interferences were expected to pull, push or throw him for an extra foot or inch. But, nary a hand touched me. I did not understand it, and must have shown my confusion, for one day the only other Jewish boy on the squad said to me, "Don't let it get you, kid; it's tough going for a Jew on this squad, but you've got what it takes and you'll make good." So, that's what it was! It was my first introduction to the *Ensaio* with which discrimination could be practiced.

My education along these lines progressed rapidly. I had played in all the freshman games, was considered a first stringer and fully expected to "win my numerals" in the final game. When the coach called out the starting lineup in the locker room, just before game time, my name was not on the list, and nobody seemed to think it odd. I did, of course. What hurt me the most was that there was no way of openly protesting this affront.

without being childish, and the best I could do was to take it out on the opposing players when necessity compelled the coach to put me into the game.

The open attack—the "goddam Jew"—came on Friday afternoon. The varsity coach—we had no rule barring freshmen those days—kept me for special instruction; I was being taught the fine art of throwing my body into mass plays, and for that purpose a skeleton offense was opposed to me. On the very first rehearsal I felt a fist on my jaw. It happened again, and the third time the epithet was thrown with the fist. Whatever polish I had acquired in the past few years left me completely, and with the choicest language of my past I sailed into the senior to whom I traced the offense. To my chagrin, he wouldn't fight. I thought later that the whole thing may have been a prearranged affair, to test my toughness, for the next day I was put into the varsity game. But at the time I was burned up.

There were other incidents, on the field and on the campus. One that sticks in my memory after all these years occurred about three months after the start of the term. A fellow with whom I had been very friendly at high school, a member of my fraternity there, passed me as I was crossing the campus with another friend, without acknowledging my salutation. I said to my companion: "What's the matter with Carl, is he deaf?" "No, not deaf, but didn't you see that fraternity pledge pin on his lapel? He can't be friendly with a Jew now." That hurt.

Soon I learned that discrimination was not confined to the students. Some of the Jewish upper-classmen protested openly against the wave of anti-Semitism that year—I learned later that it was a regular autumnal phenomenon—and were for doing something about it. They called a meeting. I would have laughed at such a thing in high school, but I went to this one. That is something the persecutors do not understand—that persecution makes a minority; as the professional Jews well know, if Jews are unmolested they tend to lose all sense of commonality and go their separate ways; they coalesce in proportion to the pressure put upon them. At this meeting a committee was appointed to consult with a Jewish professor, a man of international repute, on ways and means. "Forget it," advised the professor, "and it will die down. Let me tell you something. We Jewish members of the faculty are invited to all faculty functions, but we always decline, because we are expected to decline."

A MISSION IS BORN

BY THE end of my freshman year I had about soured on college life. Being husky and pugnacious, I found relief in fistfights, whenever the opportunity presented itself, which was rare, because the affronts were subtle and intangible; I don't doubt that sensitiveness found slights where none were intended. It occurred to me later that if I had developed in my earlier years a sense of comradeship with Jews as Jews, adjustment to this new world would not have gone so hard. I could have eased into the discrimination rather than have it pounded into me. I realized, too late, that I would have done better by myself if I had not ventured into the sacred temple of footballism. One is never hurt if one keeps one's place. It must have been particularly difficult for the rich Jewish boys who tried to buy their way into forbidden social circles and were despised for it by their own kind, as well as by the others.

Beginning with my sophomore year I went to college for the sole purpose of learning a trade, and learning it as fast as possible. So, in spite of the necessity of earning enough to pay my tuition, I took on sufficient subjects, and one summer course, to cut my college career by one year. But, peculiarly enough, my hard introduction into antisemitism blossomed into a purpose; I would try to find the cause for this horrible thing and see what could be done about eradicating it. To read that and I adhered from the elective to much philosophy as was allowed to me. Undergraduate. This idea came to me. I think from the hominid reference to God and odium which I ran across in a text book used in one of the philosophy

courses; I had already come to the *a priori* conclusion that religion was at the bottom of social disorders. Maybe, then, philosophy would help me solve the riddle.

I remember particularly a course in the history of philosophy. The sessions were held late in the afternoon for the convenience of students from the theological seminary. There were also some older students, specials, with heretical tendencies, and only the diplomatic skill of the professor prevented the metaphysical banter from becoming brawls. The post-session arguments in the corridors provided the real fun of the course; and here the atheists had the best of it, probably because they were more emphatic. The sharpest of these was a Jew, a special student about thirty years old, whose deep sincerity indicated that he had a mission. Before the year was up the Godless ones had me on their side, and I had a mission too. An emotional experience had given my intellectual groping a definite direction.

There was no doubt in my mind that I had found "truth." Having found it I was in no mood for further questioning, for contemplative reflection. All I needed now was confirmation of my discovery, for which I looked to propaganda. I swallowed whole the agnosticism of Robert Ingersoll and the "Age of Reason" became my bible against the Bible. The anti-religious tales with which seventeenth and eighteenth century literature is full served as documentary proof of the perfidy of all things religious. Atheistic literature and a publication, for which I later wrote an article or two, fed me with phrases that served for reason. It is easy to found a philosophy upon a half-truth, the easiest thing in the world of thought. The antisemitism which had hurt me became only a single expression of the evil which religion had always wrought, and I linked the sufferings of the Jews with the slaughter of the Huguenots, the massacre of Christians by the followers of Ahab, the Inquisition and all the persecutions that throughout history had been done in the name of God. The Borgias can be explained psychologically or politically. I chose to explain them as the product of religious mania. Whenever I read of slaughter in the name of "God and country" I blamed it on God alone. Religion became the cause of all strife, the church the altar upon which human happiness was sacrificed, clericalism the embodiment of all evil. The world would never be a fit place to live in until the whole kit and kaboodle were wiped out. And toward that wind-mill I tilted my lance.

I sometimes wonder whether reformers are more interested in their egos than their reforms. My judgment in the matter would be biased. At any rate, I think I was quite sincere in my anti-God crusade. I sought converts. In Chicago—where I was employed as an advertising man, having given up as hopeless for a Jew the ambition of becoming a professor of English—there was an institution known as the "nut club." Membership was voluntary, unpaid, and the meetings were held in a park. Every warm evening or week-end men bent on impressing their views on one another would proceed to do so without formality. Two arguments would lock horns and if they tumbled well a crowd would gather about them. No parliamentary rules and very few rules of conduct impeded the progress of the debate. How upon hour this would continue, with new protagonists taking the place of the exhausted ones. This "nut club" was just what I needed to develop my enthusiasm and I was a regular member, the pattern of my young wife notwithstanding. I was loyal to my atheism.

MORE EDUCATION

ABOUT eight years after I left college I ran across a book I had bought something about and had put down as my reading list. It was *Freud and Philosophy*. A friend had a copy in his library; he said he had never read it and was waiting for him to show it and he introduced me to it. The book was a production entitled *The Problem*. It explored the general social problem of the reader as inquiry into the cause of his self particularly interested in the

question, although my contact should have predisposed me to the approach of the literary style. I was Arnold, a little of the time of Macaulay, the period of the new-world fervor that was eating into the old world. I was more interested in Henry George—some fellow I heard had run for mayor, I said it than in what he said. Probably a nineteenth century surmise, whom I had misapprehended, whom I had misapprehended, whom I had misapprehended. For six months I read the book, even to the neglect of my studies. Some technicalities, delayed my progress, and a delayed discussion of the nature of the book. The book came near flooring me. The occasional panegyrics about the author sugar-coated his ideal ideas. Through it all cogency in the reasoning I denied. I became convinced that I was wrong.

And then came a thought that put my enthusiasm to rest. I thought that poverty and the up social hatreds, then huge manifestation and organization, not a basic cause. That the case I had built up. So to myself, I were to level all the priesthood out of existence everybody that religion there would still be the property; there would still be a that makes for tough boys that produced dinner-coated men. And maybe, I continue which I had been laying of the convincing piety in the of poverty, as Mr. Ge. Well, at any rate, there was strings to my bow, economic and I could vary my diatribe.

I tried out my newly as in the park. The defense of gets conviction of its core before I knew the answers. I jerry questions with plausible strings enough, I frequent laboration for in the book, to refer often. The crowd much more interested in it than the midst-of-plenty argument tacks on the institution of it might be that this creates some influence on my intellect even a crusader likes to pl and, in fact, likes a crowd gradually gave up on religion reading time to economics and lems. These were subjects I attention to at college seemed all-important and I all I could find on them, course, the other books of The thread of piety which works I dismissed for years persiflage. Finally, and I dived on me that his religion in some way integrated his his social philosophy. His natural law meant something of thought and I determined what it was, even though scorned by pragmatism as utopian, I was sure there was

WHAT ABOUT "NATURAL"

I FOUND in the writings frequent references to absolute right. Upon reflection to me that though this idea metaphysical I had been it, without question, in my mind. It is the idea of the Declaration of that in their public opinion must be recognized right. I in inherent claim to it against the others. But because the authority for it is not a legal matter, it cannot be quite that the law, or theory, as to the implementation this inherent law, from the law of an to many may not affect even to

took my job, who robbed me of my trade and my business? Peculiarly enough, the blame is always put on somebody who is least capable of defending himself from the charge or from any action that might be taken. In Texas it may be the Mexican; in California all economic troubles came from Oriental competitors; in New England, after the Civil War and even into this century, it was the Irish. The ex-slave has been an especially easy target, and then, of course, there is the Jew. There must be a culprit, as every reformer knows; would socialism have come as far as it has without the help of bosses, capitalists, bourgeois and fascists?

It is a very ancient custom, this business of scapegoats. According to the record, the Philistines served the Israelites in that capacity, while all the troubles of the Roman plebeian came out of Carthage. The peculiarity of the Jew is that he has served as scapegoat number one for nearly twenty centuries throughout the predominantly Christian world. Other minorities have been picked on at times, but wherever the Jew has made his presence felt in numbers he has held the lead role with little competition. The pogrom has been standard procedure whenever economic difficulties burst into social disaffection. Admitting the evidence of history on this point, there still remains the question as to why the Jew has been so consistently singled out.

We cannot dislike a people until we are convinced that these people are essentially different from us. It is easy then to establish inferiority. Our military men found, for instance, that hatred of the Germans was difficult to arouse, simply because it was difficult to establish an essential difference between the New Yorker and the Berliner, and tortuous argument had to be resorted to; with the Japanese the problem was quite simple for anybody so different from us in appearance must be inferior to us in capacities, to say nothing of character. Similar rationalization supports the disabilities put upon Orientals, Mexicans and Negroes in this country. The Jew, however, makes things difficult by offering a minimum of physical differences from his tormentor; his particularism had to be established.

This problem of identification was made easy by the Jew. He made himself a "different" kind of person long years ago. He accumulated a culture in the ancient days and has carried this culture, like necessary baggage, throughout his peregrinations. There is no doubt that where they have not suffered from segregation, or too confined segregation, Jews have added the culture of their neighbors to their own, sometimes to the point of self-immersion. Nevertheless, the indicia of their culture—which is the sum-total of those habits of language, tradition, religion, knowledge and manners which an integrated people acquires—have left their mark. The

mark becomes less visible as less notice is paid it, and more pronounced as persecution forces them back into themselves, for mutual protection and solace. It will be recalled that when Hitler began his anti-semitic campaign many a German Jew had to learn what it is to be a Jew; the culture was foreign to him.

One item in this culture needs to be emphasized at this time, I believe it is the one that has got the Jew into difficulties. That is the tendency toward self-expression which we call individualism. It may be that this characteristic stems from his ancient education (see the Hebrew Prophets), and it may be that it was brought on by necessity. At any rate, the Jewish child has drilled into him almost from birth the importance of self-improvement through self-help. Never is the individual taught that group excellence is more important than, or different from, individual excellence. It is he, the unit of the tribe, that makes it. Undoubtedly, this training shows up in an inordinate self-respect which, in a weak character, becomes irritating self-assertion. The point I wish to make is that Jewish culture is definitely not socialistic, even though tribal adherence has always been emphasized as a matter of self preservation. That many Jews have advanced socialistic ideas is true, but I believe this can be explained as an inclination to protect against injustices, which is characteristic of the individualist. Karl Marx, it must be remembered, was an anti-statist, advocating the peculiar notion of abolishing the state through an interim dictatorship. Among the Old Bolsheviks were a number of Jews, more than their proportionate population would entitle them to; but it is significant that very few of them escaped the Stalinist purges; the Jew is too individualistic to be tolerated by the collectivism he sometimes urges.

Be that as it may, the differentiation which marks the Jew is cultural. A friend of mine, a scholar and an aesthete, deplored the urge toward assimilation on the ground that the best in this culture would thereby be lost to mankind. However, it is his cultural idioms which identify the Jew as a "different" sort of person, thus qualifying him for the role of minority scapegoat. Whether assimilation can completely eradicate these idioms is a question that cannot be decided until a long period of non-discrimination has permitted assimilation to take its course. So long as the institutions which bring about a scarcity economy are in force, the Jew will not divest himself of his historic role. The so-called Jewish problem, then—and this is true of all minority problems—is at bottom neither racial nor religious, but economic. Its eradication is dependent on the solution of the poverty-amidst-plenty problem. Maybe natural law can show the way; surely, the makeshifts of political law have failed.

End the Republic Program

AGAIN, the politicians have let us down. During the war, not yet officially terminated—they promised us a glorious *One World* in which all would be peaceful and harmonious. After the war, they handed us an elaborate and costly organization which, they assured us, would effectively prevent even a semblance of war. They gave us, too, a World Bank, by which tax-money could be conveniently funnelled into the bankrupt countries of the world, telling us that the restored economies of the countries would prevent a collapse of international relations. What have we now? The UN is a farce—a tragic farce, nothing but a club of name-calling rowdies, using the thin cloak protocol to disguise their jockeying for position in a conflict that seem so confidently to expect.

So, the selfsame politicians who got us into the last war, have shown absolutely no competence in the making of peace, have failed to make good on each and every promise they made us, now bring forth the European Recovery Program. This thing will bring us peace because, they assert, it will tie to us with bands of gold some fifteen faltering allies. That will make a gang too formidable for Russia to tackle.

Fiddlesticks! The nations of the world, including the beneficiaries of the ERP, now owe us more than \$85 billions. That is five times as much as the ERP contemplates giving away in the next five years. Our politicians began handing out this colossal sum before the first world war and have been accelerating their bounty ever since. What have we got for all this money? Gratitude? Allies? Friends? Russia, the potential enemy, received more than \$11 billions; another billion went to her present satellites and probable allies.

None of this money will ever come back to us. Our tariff policy makes a refund practically impossible. The bonds sold to raise this money will continue to drain our economy for hundreds of years; repudiation seems to be the only way we can ever get rid of this burden.

Shall we send good money after bad? What for?

WE don't want war. Another war will see the end of our republican form of government. It will necessarily have to be run on a totalitarian basis; meaning that the remnants of personal liberties left us will be wiped out. Already the bureaucracy built up during the last war—and getting no smaller—is thrusting its nose at the legislative branch. Under a new "national emergency" the Congress will become a rubber-stamp, just like Hitler's *Reichstag*; the judiciary will be reduced to "interpreting" the directives issued by the omniscient saviors of the country. Necessarily, all property will be nationalized, for how else can the cost of another war be met? Criticism of the holier-than-thou will amount to treason, and "national security" will require a substantial press.

The European Recovery Program will not prevent war. It is not intended to prevent war. It is a war measure, pure and simple. If it goes through, it should really be named the End of the Republic Program.

The only way to prevent war is to get out of Europe, lock, stock and barrel. If the people there want communism, let them have it. Communism must destroy itself because it is incapable of production above a bare subsistence level. If it engulfs Europe, we will have to write off that continent until such time as its political structure collapses entirely and a breed of sensible people restore it to decency. In the meantime, we will get stronger by the wealth we retain and accumulate. While this may be poor solace for the Europeans who have to live through communism, it will not be worse for them than a war.

Meanwhile, let us not drift into that very totalitarianism which destroyed the civilization of Europe. Whatever strength we possess is due to the institutions of private property, free speech and a free press. We have grown as a people because, until the last war, our government was weak. The only war that will do us good is a war with Washington.

Read: *Will Dollars Save the World?* by Henry Hazlitt, The

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